



Senators Call for Language Denying Reproductive  
Health Access Be Dropped from Omnibus  
November 19, 2004

**Washington, DC** – Senator Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) and eight other women Senators today urged that a clause to allow health-care providers to deny women access to reproductive health services not be included in the FY2005 Omnibus Appropriations bill.

Senators Feinstein, Barbara Boxer (D-Calif.), Olympia Snowe (R-Maine), Maria Cantwell (D-Wash.), Hillary Clinton (D-N.Y.), Barbara Mikulski (D-Md.), Patty Murray (D-Wash.), Debbie Stabenow (D-Mich.), and Blanche Lincoln (D-Ark.) and today sent the following letter to Senate Appropriations Committee Chairman Ted Stevens (R-Alaska):

November 19, 2004

The Honorable Ted Stevens  
Chairman, Senate Committee on Appropriations  
S-128  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Stevens:

We are writing to oppose a provision called the federal refusal clause from being included in the FY 2005 Omnibus Appropriations bill. This provision was included by Representative Dave Weldon in the FY 2005 House Labor-HHS-Education Appropriations bill and it would allow a broad range of health-care companies to refuse to comply with federal, state, and local laws and regulations pertaining to abortion services.

Should this provision become law, federal, state, or local government may no longer require any institutional or individual health-care provider to provide, pay for, or refer abortion services. This will mean that medical providers in hospitals and clinics across the country will likely be victims of demonstrations and intimidation as this provision allows that they be forbidden from providing abortion care to women who need it, and also to deny women referrals to another provider. It will interfere with the authority of Attorneys General to reject, approve or impose terms on the sale or transfer of assets by nonprofit health entities as under current law. For example, an Attorney General could no longer reject a merger proposal on the grounds that the result would be diminished community access to full reproductive health services.

This provision has never been considered in the Senate. There have been no hearings held and no debate about this provision. Further, this provision puts all states' Labor-HHS-Education funding at risk and will require them to change existing laws.

The federal refusal clause is harmful to women and denies women access to reproductive health services. We ask that you oppose its inclusion in the FY 2005 Omnibus Appropriations bill.

Thank you for your consideration.

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